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paralleled in a general way the replies to the first. Thus somewhat over one-third of the students answering had had considerably less than one theme or exercise per week.

That the problem of the amount of written work of a high school student should have is not merely an academic one is indicated by the relation of the quantity of written work a student has had in high school to his standing in the first year class in college. Sixteen out of 22 students who had had comparatively little writing to do in high school were reported by their college instructors in English to be seriously deficient. Up to the present session, two sections of the first year English course in the University have been devoted solely to deficient students. When a poll was taken of these sections last year, it was found that fully one-half of the students in them had had less than one theme a week in high school and that those deficient students who were poorest in their work were those who, previously, had had least practice in composition. The following tabulation of the answers of the students of the deficient sections to the series of questions asked of them may be of some significance:

- | | |
|---|----|
| (1) Total number of students in deficient sections..... | 44 |
| No. of students with less than one theme per week... | 23 |
| (2) No. of very deficient students..... | 14 |
| No. of very deficient students with practically no written work | 10 |

—J. S. M., Jr.

ORAL READING

GOOD oral reading is rare; it should be common. Poor reading is generally due to one of two mistaken ideas as to what reading is. Each of these ideas is characterized by an obvious fault. The first idea is that reading consists of calling words. The characteristic fault rising from this idea is a monotonous voice saying word after word with very little indication that the reader realizes that the words have any meaning and with no indication that the reader is conscious of any emotional content. Reading of this sort sounds like nothing so much as the old-fashioned first grade reading lesson of "See-the-red-hen-Do-you-see-the-cow-Yes-I-see-the-cow." The second idea is that reading is an artificial thing, a sort of stunt. Its characteristic fault is that peculiar quality and use of the voice that ministers themselves call "the ministerial tone." Use of the voice as well as quality is mentioned in this connection because a characteristic feature of the ministerial tone is the failure of the voice to come down on the points of thought. The natural curves of the voice in indicating the shades and dif-

ferences of the ideas are thus lost in the artificial cadences of the chanting tone. The remedy for both these faults is for the reader to get the idea: first, that he is reading, not words, but groups of words; second, that these groups of words represent ideas; and third, that to read these groups of words aloud and so to convey to the hearer the ideas held by the writer is a perfectly natural act. In addition to these obvious faults rising from the fundamental causes of poor reading, there are several faults that are common to all forms of speech. Poor voice quality, indefinite enunciation, incorrect pronunciation,—these faults are so common as to make one who is reasonably free from them quite distinctive in his speech. These faults of detail can of course be overcome only by practice and by watching all of our speech.

It is in the public school that contact between teacher and pupil is most constant, and it is there also that the pupils are in the most plastic stage of their development. For the elimination of the general speech faults, therefore, and the correction of the two erroneous conceptions of what reading is, there is almost no hope except in the public school teacher.—G. M. McK.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY TRY IT

By JOHN RODEMEYER

OH, say, can you sing from the start to the end,
What so proudly you stand for when orchestras play it;
When the whole congregation, in voices that blend
Strike up the grand hymn, and then torture and slay it?
How they bellow and shout when they're first starting out,
But "the dawn's early light" finds them floundering about,
'Tis "The Star-Spangled Banner" they're trying to sing,
But they don't know the words of the precious old thing.
Hark! The "twilight's last gleaming" has some of them stopped,
But the valiant survivors press forward serenely
To "the ramparts we watched," where some others are dropped,
And the loss of the leaders is manifest keenly.
Then "the rockets' red glare" gives the bravest a scare,
And there's few left to face the "bombs bursting in air"—
'Tis a thin line of heroes that manage to save
The last of the verse and "the home of the brave."